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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**DECAL Completes Georgia Early Learning and
Development Standards (GELDS)**

Higher-quality Standards for Birth to Age 5 Will Be Implemented This Fall

ATLANTA, Ga., (July 8, 2013) – Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) announced today that its Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS) are finalized and ready to be used by early care and education directors, teachers, families, teacher preparation programs, and other stakeholders. Initiated in 2010, the revision project stemmed from the need for higher quality early learning standards in Georgia and the need for better alignment with the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS) for K-12.

“We commissioned top experts in the field to conduct an alignment study and to provide recommendations,” said DECAL Commissioner Bobby Cagle. “The finalized standards are the result of the researchers' recommendations and feedback from stakeholders across Georgia.”

The next important step in the GELDS roll out is to introduce everyone to the new standards. For an introductory video produced by DECAL and Georgia Public Broadcasting, go to www.gelds.dec.al.ga.gov. The video includes a message from Commissioner Cagle, an overview of the GELDS and interviews with special guests. More informational videos will be posted to this site in the coming months.

Also on the GELDS website are printable documents to assist in planning lessons and making decision regarding curriculum and assessment.

“It’s an exciting time for early learning programs in Georgia,” said Susan Adams, assistant commissioner for Georgia’s Pre-K Program. “Our state continues to gain national attention because of our commitment to improve the quality of early learning programs across the state.”

To access the GELDS, go to www.gelds.dec.al.ga.gov. Training and professional development will be provided over the next year for teachers and administrators of children age birth to five.

About Bright from the Start

Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning is responsible for meeting the child care and early education needs of Georgia’s children and their families. It administers the nationally recognized Georgia’s Pre-K Program, licenses child care centers and home-based child care, administers Georgia's Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program, federal nutrition programs, and manages voluntary quality enhancement programs.

The department also houses the Head Start State Collaboration Office, distributes federal funding to enhance the quality and availability of child care, and works collaboratively with Georgia child care resource and referral agencies and organizations throughout the state to enhance early care and education. For more information, go to www.dec.al.ga.gov.